



May 2, 2018

Market Changes, Inflation Lead to Proposed Garbage and Recycling Service Rate Increase

Nearly five years after the last garbage and recycling collection rate increase, the Hillsboro City Council will consider rate adjustments during its May 15, 2018, meeting. Rising costs and recent recycling limits imposed by China prompted the proposed increase, which would impact commercial customers and residential customers (\$2.90 per month based on a 35-gallon roll cart). If approved, the new rates would take effect beginning June 1, 2018. Still, Hillsboro's garbage and recycling rates will remain among the lowest in the region.



The collection of garbage and recyclable materials from Hillsboro homes and businesses is performed by six private waste collection companies that are authorized under contract with the City to perform the services within established boundaries. The rates which the companies charge for collection services are set by the City Council and are reviewed annually based on an assessment of company revenues and expenses.

The annual assessment to determine whether rates are adequate to cover expenses — or whether an increase is warranted — includes many variables, such as costs for labor, fuel, health care, landfill, and recycling. As a City, we take every measure possible to avoid increases in rates. However, as costs increase, rate adjustments can be necessary.

This year, recent changes in recycling markets have impacted rates. In late 2017, the recycling industry began to experience a major global market disruption resulting from new limitations on the import of recyclable materials into China. For years, most of the recyclables from Oregon and beyond have been sold to companies in China for processing. As a result of this change, new markets for the recycling must be found, and added efforts are needed to better sort the materials at the recycling facility.

Costs to the collection companies have risen dramatically, and it will take time to address this challenge. However, this situation also presents a great opportunity for a comprehensive, collaborative review of how we recycle, from the curbside cart to the market place. Ultimately, we will identify better ways to recycle, and we will reduce what we put in the landfill.

How can you help? We all play a critical role in maintaining our status as national leaders in recycling. To help you recycle most effectively, we have provided answers to some frequently asked questions that include best practices and resources, which you can read at Hillsboro-Oregon.gov/SolidWaste.

Together, we can make sure that Hillsboro and Oregon remain national leaders in recycling.

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